

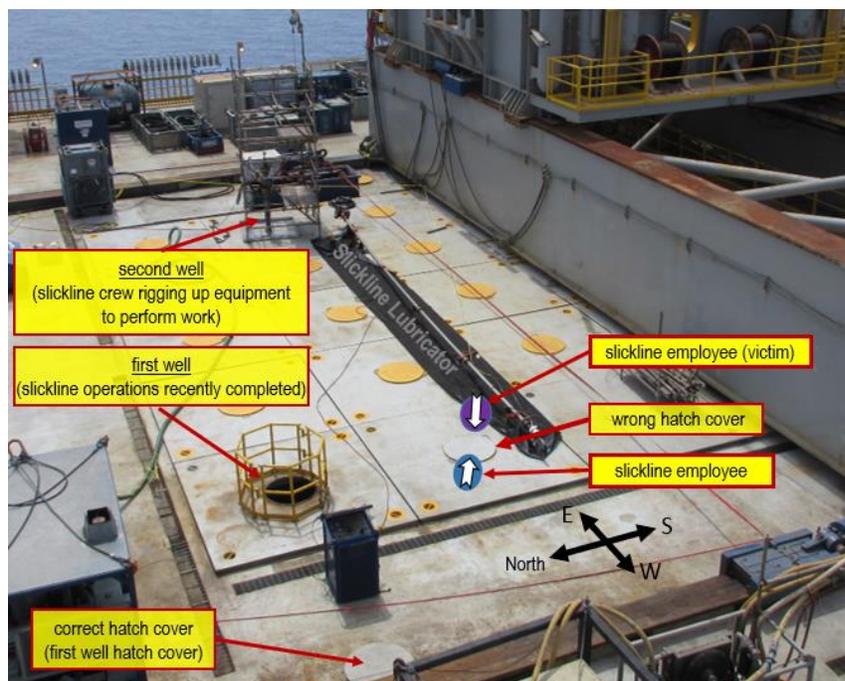
SAFETY ALERT



Safety Alert No. 406
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Labeling, Removing, Storing and Installing Hatch Covers



View of a deck on a Gulf of Mexico facility that resulted in a fatality.

A fatality occurred on a Gulf of Mexico facility when a slickline Operator and slickline Helper mistakenly picked up the wrong well hatch cover. While doing so, the slickline Helper fell through the newly exposed hole and descended approximately 90 feet to a lower deck, suffering fatal injuries.

The slickline crew recently completed operations on one well and were in the process of rigging up equipment on a second well. While walking to the second well, the two slickline employees initiated a task not covered in the pre-job discussions by attempting to cover the well hatch to the first well. The employees mistakenly picked up the wrong hatch cover from inside the Well Bay Area – one that was already covering a hatch opening.

A BSEE investigation concluded this incident occurred due to the following probable causes: lack of situational awareness while picking up the hatch cover; no physical barrier installed to prevent the removal of the hatch covers; performing activities outside the scope of work without an effective hazard analysis; and lack of clear labeling to indicate hatch cover to hatch placement.

The investigation concluded the contributing causes of the incident were a lack of adequate written job procedures and the well hatch design. Additionally, the BSEE investigation identified a lack of job task focus as a contributing factor. Additional information about this incident can be found here: <https://www.bsee.gov/what-we-do/incident-investigations/offshore-incident-investigations/panel-investigation-reports>.

BSEE makes the following recommendations to strengthen implementation of existing safety and environmental management systems:

- Incorporate a facility-specific detailed procedure for the removal and installation of well hatch covers, as well as for the storage of well hatch covers when removed from the well hatch;
- Incorporate a general lifting procedure requirement to maintain a complete visual of walking path when lifting and transporting objects. Incorporate a “Don’t step where you can’t see” requirement;
- Incorporate at least one physical barrier for removal of the hatch covers such as a lock-out/ tag-out safety program and/ or additional hatch cover weight to prevent maneuverability by personal without mechanical assistance;
- Ensure all hatch covers are clearly labeled with the corresponding well identification;
 - Ensure labels are installed on the deck that correspond to the hatch cover labels;
 - Maintain consistent terminology for all well hatch locations in documents and diagrams;
- Ensure employees receive practical training in the removal and installation of well hatch covers, as well as for the storage of well hatch covers when removed from the well hatch;
- When removing or installing a well hatch cover, consider using a crane or other material handling method that limits the potential for personnel to be close to open holes;
- Ensure contractor personnel are specifically familiarized to the area where they will work and are aware of any existing or potential open hole hazards that could be created;

- Encourage personnel to stop work and evaluate hazards with all personnel involved in the job safety analysis (JSA) before considering activities outside the scope of work; and,
- Incorporate a hatch cover design that allows personnel to clearly identify a hatch cover in a well hatch, as opposed to one laying on the deck.

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A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding a potential safety issue. It also contains recommendations that could assist avoiding potential incidents on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Category: Equipment Installations